

Despite generations of foreign occupation and repressive rule, including invasion by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939 and the declaration of martial law in 1981, Poles have remained firm in their hopes for freedom. Their recent triumph over communist rule and their peaceful transition to a democratic system of government underscored the truth of the timeless refrain: "Poland is not lost while Poles still live."

Today the people of Poland are writing a bright new chapter in their nation's history. We Americans applaud their courageous steps to reform their economy and government, and we reaffirm our support for their efforts. In addition to offering direct financial aid, the United States has been engaged in efforts to encourage private sector investment and the growth of market institutions in Poland, through such vehicles as a housing loan guarantee program, the Polish Stabilization Fund, and the Polish-American Enterprise Fund. They symbolize our commitment to helping Poland establish stable democratic rule and a successful market-oriented economy.

In recognition of the strong and friendly ties that exist between the United States and Poland, the Congress, by Public Law 102-115, has designated October 1991 as "Polish-American Heritage Month" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this month.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 1991 as Polish-American Heritage Month. I urge all Americans to join their fellow citizens of Polish descent in observance of this month.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this ninth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6354 of October 10, 1991

Columbus Day, 1991

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As we approach the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' first landing in the New World, renewed attention is being focused on this celebrated Admiral of the Ocean Seas in both Europe and the Americas. During our annual observance of Columbus Day, we celebrate all that this master mariner has symbolized to our Nation. For generations, Christopher Columbus has embodied the spirit of exploration and discovery—and the beginning of America itself.

When Columbus began his first bold transatlantic voyage in 1492, he was pursuing both a theory and an opportunity. The journey promised as much risk as reward, and it required substantial courage, initiative, and resolve on the part of Columbus and his crew. These qualities have been shared by virtually every great pioneer. Thus the story of

Christopher Columbus reminds us that all fruitful exploration and discovery begins with a willingness to set one's sails higher, to seek new horizons, and to follow wherever one's imagination and experience might lead. It also reminds us that industry and labor are the foundation of learning and progress.

On this occasion, however, we celebrate not only the spirit of learning but also the story of our Nation. The meeting of cultures that was made possible by Christopher Columbus marked the beginning of a new chapter in history. The subsequent exchange of knowledge, resources, and ideas between the Old World and the New led to the development of two entire continents and to the birth of a Nation committed to liberty and opportunity.

Columbus Day has long been a special occasion to Italian Americans and to Americans of Spanish descent. Yet as we remember the brave son of Genoa who, with help from the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand V and Isabella I, linked two hemispheres, we know that this day holds meaning for us all. It is a time to recall the many pioneers who, like Columbus, have challenged the unknown and carried humankind further along the path of progress. It is a time to celebrate the rich heritage of America's native peoples, as well as our strengths as a Nation of immigrants. On this day, we also celebrate the close ties we share with our neighbors in Central and South America and the Caribbean, as fellow heirs of Columbus' voyages. Our Administration is working hard to develop these ties even closer through the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative. Most important, perhaps, Columbus Day is a time for us to do some exploring of our own—to study and learn from the past so that we might appreciate more fully the blessings of freedom and the principles that unite all Americans today.

In tribute to the legacy of Christopher Columbus, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934 (48 Stat. 657), as modified by the act of June 28, 1968 (82 Stat. 250), has requested the President to proclaim the second Monday in October of each year as "Columbus Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 14, 1991, as Columbus Day. I call on the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of Christopher Columbus.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 10th day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH